



The President's Daily Brief

16 October 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS


The current situation in the Middle East appears on
Page 1.

Disorders have eased in Bangkok following the departure
for exile of former government leaders Thanom and
Praphat. (*Page 3*)

In South Vietnam, there is some evidence that the Com-
munists may be preparing to retaliate for recent gov-
ernment air strikes north of Saigon. (*Page 4*)

Afghanistan has complained that Pakistan is risking
serious consequences by resuming an old road-building
project in disputed tribal lands. (*Page 5*)

The Turkish elections apparently will result in an un-
stable coalition government in the absence of a major-
ity for either major party. (*Page 6*)

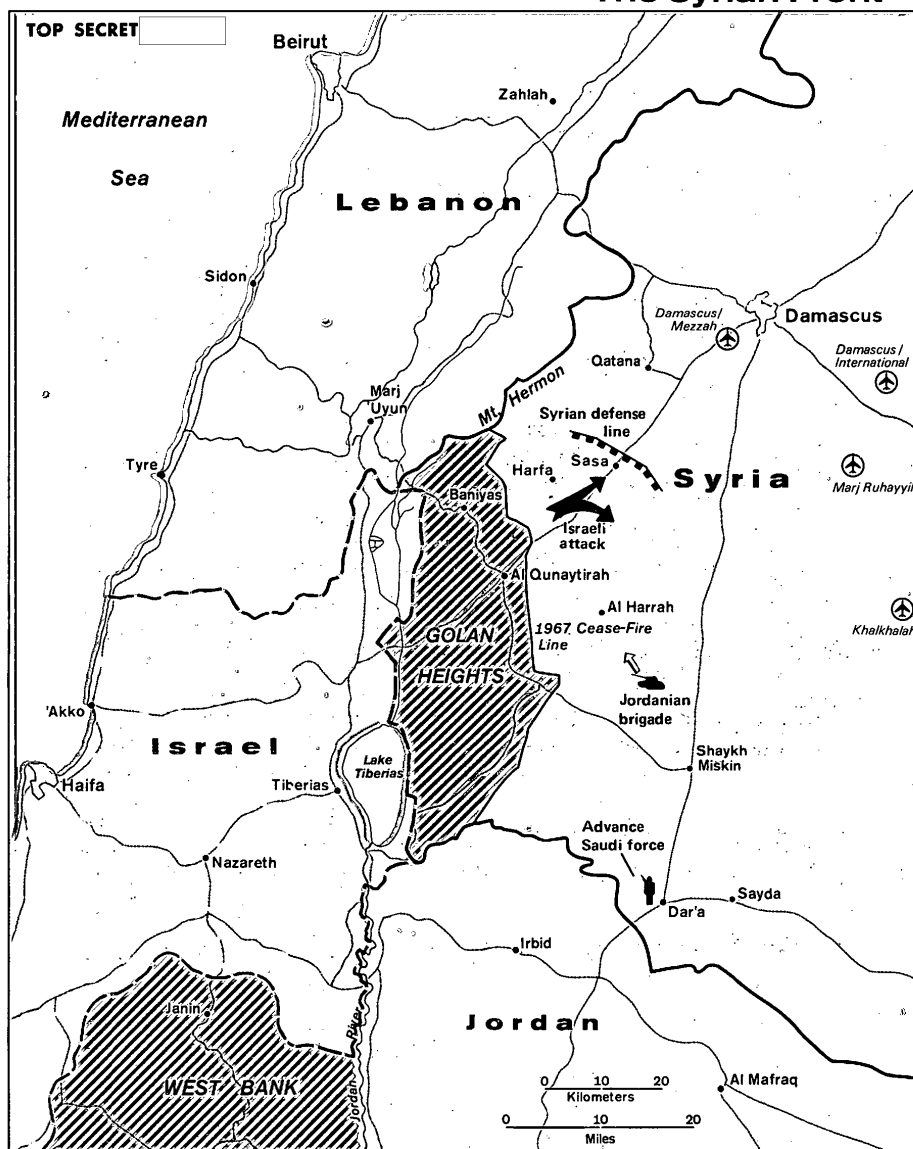
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The Syrian Front

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THE MIDDLE EAST

Yesterday's fighting brought little change on either the Egyptian or Syrian fronts. There was no significant ground activity in the Sinai, and air activity was also down from Sunday's high. Israeli aircraft hit Egyptian armored concentrations near Port Said as well as airfields in the Nile delta and south of Cairo.

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On the Syrian front, where yesterday's action featured artillery and tank duels, some Jordanian forces may have become involved. [redacted] that the Jordanian tank column is moving toward Al Harrah, close to Israeli positions. Amman announced, probably with some exaggeration, that six Israeli tanks were destroyed in a clash with the Jordanian unit. [redacted] an Israeli rocket attack killed a Jordanian soldier yesterday. Jordan's involvement, however minimal, has brought King Husayn favorable publicity throughout the Arab world, and Algeria and Tunisia reportedly have decided to restore diplomatic relations with Amman.

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After ten days of fighting, combined Arab losses are estimated at 13,500 to 16,600 men, 1,150 to 1,240 tanks, 250 to 270 aircraft, and 20 to 26 ships. Estimated Israeli losses are 2,900 to 3,100 men, 750 to 850 tanks, 95 to 110 aircraft, and as many as four ships.

All of the major pipeline terminals in the eastern Mediterranean are now closed. The loss to Western Europe is about 2 million barrels of crude a day--about 13 percent of normal consumption. Italy, Spain, and Austria are most affected; both Rome and Madrid have instituted controls to prevent the export of petroleum products.

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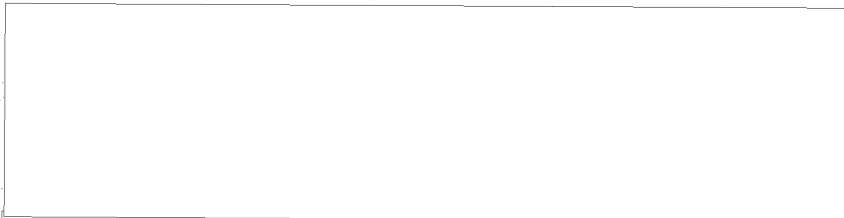
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Moscow's media have announced the US decision to send military supplies to Israel, but no official reaction or press commentary has yet appeared. Premier Kosygin avoided the announcement in a speech last night, and expressed some concern that the "opponents of detente" would use the Middle East crisis as a pretext to revive the cold war.

The extensive Soviet airlift to the Middle East continued into its sixth day yesterday, with approximately 70 cargo transports detected either landing or en route to Egypt, Syria, or Iraq. A Soviet civil transport, which has been used to transport high Soviet officials and Arab dignitaries, is scheduled to depart Moscow this morning for Cairo.

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THAILAND

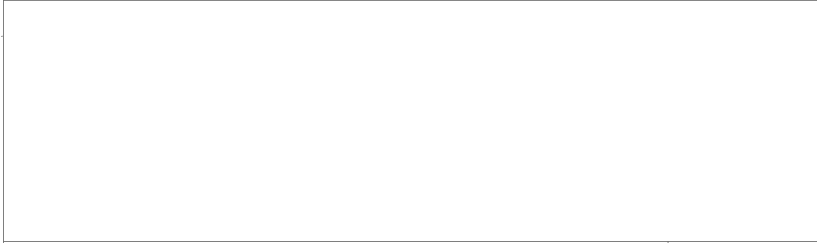
Disorders eased late yesterday following the announcement that former government leaders Thanom and Praphat and the controversial Colonel Narong had resigned all their posts and left Thailand for exile. King Phumiphon engineered the departure of the three symbols of the old order with the backing of army chief Krit Siwara. Student leaders apparently have succeeded in persuading some of the more radical elements to lift their siege of Bangkok's police stations. The army evidently still is not moving to impose tight security on the city, however.

Prime Minister Sanya's tentative cabinet list draws heavily on veteran technicians and bureaucrats, most of whom are Western-educated and favorably disposed to the US. Such a cabinet would set better with the military than with the students, who might object to its conservative cast and to the absence of fresh and young faces. Air chief Marshal Dawee, proposed as defense minister, might arouse opposition in view of his reputation for corruption, despite his closeness to key officers who have been supporting the students.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The Communists may have decided to retaliate for recent government air strikes against their installations north of Saigon.

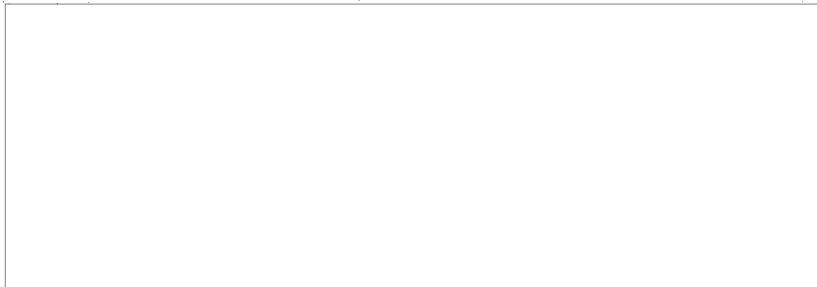


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Vietnamese Communist propagandists also appear to be building a case for stepping up the level of fighting. They have intensified their charges that Saigon, with US complicity, is committing increasingly flagrant violations of the cease-fire. On October 14, Hanoi warned that the more "crimes" Saigon commits, the "stronger the counterblows will be."



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AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN

An Afghan Foreign Ministry official yesterday warned US Chargé Lewis that a "very serious consequence" would result if Pakistan did not cease "provocations" along the border. The Afghans claim that Pakistani militia are resuming an old road-building project in disputed tribal lands. The official said the warning would also go directly to the Pakistani Government.

The Afghans apparently have tried to enlist support from Moscow and New Delhi in the recently revived dispute, but there is no evidence that either has promised full backing in any serious confrontation with Pakistan. The Afghans have long obtained most of their military equipment from Moscow, however, and according to President Daud, a Soviet mission, headed by an officer "of marshal rank," arrived yesterday to "direct the reorganization of the Afghan armed forces." The mission more likely will review the status of Moscow's military aid.

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TURKEY

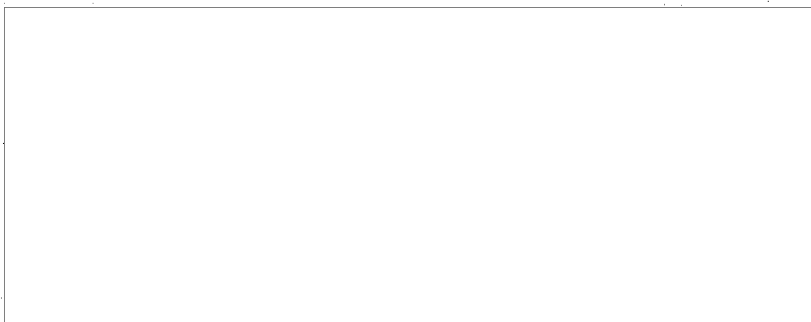
With 80 percent of the vote counted from the elections on Sunday, it appears that no party will win a parliamentary majority. An uneasy coalition government probably will be the result of the hard bargaining ahead.

It is already clear that the conservative Justice Party has suffered a setback, although when votes from the rural areas are counted it may overcome the current edge of the left-of-center Republican Peoples Party. The generally lackluster campaign conducted by former premier Demirel, the party chairman, contributed to the poor showing. Justice's partner in the current coalition has lost most of its seats. Two new right-wing parties are the main beneficiaries of the voting.

Bulent Ecevit of the Republican Peoples Party hit hard at the inflation issue and championed civil liberties and amnesty for political prisoners. Foreign or defense issues as such did not enter the campaign. The Republican Peoples platform contained a plank to resume opium poppy cultivation, but neither party leader made any such pledge in the course of the campaign.

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